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SUBJECT: DAS BRYZA'S MEETINGS WITH MFA CAUCASUS DG UMAN AND
POLICY PLANNING DG CENGIZER

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney, reasons 1.4 b, d

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. DAS Matt Bryza met in Ankara on June 14 with MFA Director General for Caucasus and Central Asia Resit Uman and MFA Director General for Policy Planning Altay Cengizer. DAS Bryza shared his views on the previous week's disappointing meeting of the Azeri and Armenian Presidents on Nagorno-Karabakh. The two sides also discussed democracy and missile defense in Azerbaijan, as well as the Abkhaz conflict and Georgia's NATO accession. DAS Bryza underscored U.S. support for Georgia's NATO aspirations and requested Turkish assistance in encouraging dialogue between Tbilisi and Sukhumi to advance a peaceful settlement of the Abkhazia conflict. DG Cengizer was pleased with bilateral consultations on policy planning and stressed the need for Turkey to do a better job describing the full historical picture in eastern Anatolia in 1915. END SUMMARY.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

¶2. (C) DAS Bryza welcomed the June 18-20 visit of Deputy U/S Cevikoz to Washington, and looked forward to the opportunity to "think things through systematically" with the GOT.

¶3. (C) On Nagorno-Karabakh, Uman informed Bryza that Minsk Group co-chair Fassier was "cautiously optimistic" about the prospects for agreement on the Basic Principles during the French Co-Chair's visit to Ankara a month earlier. Uman asked why there was a perception of no progress on N-K at St. Petersburg. Bryza said Kocharian had led the Co-Chairs and Aliyev to believe he (Kocharian) would energize his effort to reach agreement on the Basic Principles following Armenia's May parliamentary elections. The FonMins, said Bryza, had said they had carried the negotiating process as far as they could, and to the point at which decisions by the Presidents were required for further progress. Bryza said he expected the Presidents to reach agreement on the nature of the vote that would determine NK's status, e.g., plebiscite or referendum. Aliyev, however, was willing to negotiate (though his tactics were a bit passive-aggressive); Kocharian was not. Kocharian indicated he might pass this issue on to his successor after the February 2008 presidential elections, but agreed to consider another possible meeting with Aliyev at the CIS summit in October in Tajikistan. Bryza assessed that deliberations on Kosovo were also influencing Kocharian's calculus on N-K.

¶4. (C) Uman confirmed that FonMin Oskanian was coming to the BSEC Summit in Istanbul on June 25, and was planning a press conference, as well as delivering remarks to the Turkey Economic Relations Board. Uman hoped this visit would be positive, but regretted that Kocharian is not coming.

MISSILE DEFENSE

15. (C) Uman asked how U.S. missile defense plans (MD) would effect the region. Bryza said Putin's offer to incorporate Azerbaijan's radar at Gabala into U.S. MD planning was a big surprise, which he stressed to Aliyev in St. Petersburg. Aliyev indicated he realized the U.S. was taken by surprise and not talking about Azerbaijani military assets with Moscow over Baku's head. Azeri FM Mammadyarov had confirmed with Bryza that Azerbaijan wished to explore the project, and saw potential benefit in it by virtue of signaling Iran to back off from pressuring Azerbaijan while breaking Russia's monopoly over use of the Gabala radar.

PRESS FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY IN AZERBAIJAN

16. (C) Uman raised the issue of the assault on press freedom in Azerbaijan. Bryza characterized Aliyev as irritated and "emotionally wounded" when Bryza raised this matter in Baku. Aliyev claimed Azerbaijan is the only real democracy in the region, but he is widely perceived to be anti-democratic. He feels beaten right now, and DAS Bryza recommended that his "Turkic brethren" reach out to him. Uman noted that many saw the Armenian elections as having been well-administered, and suggested that Armenia has a democratic perception edge over Azerbaijan. Uman said Turkey will communicate to Azerbaijan that it needs to work on its democratic credentials, less it arm Armenia with a potent issue.

GEORGIA, RUSSIA AND ABKHAZIA

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17. (C) On Abkhazia, Uman said the situation is increasingly tense, as Russia threatens to recognize the independence of Abkhazia if others recognize Kosovo's independence. Turkey understands but does not fully agree with those who warn against affording Russia a de-facto veto against Georgia's NATO aspirations by demanding resolution of the "frozen conflicts" first. Uman said Georgia's potential NATO membership needs to be weighed against all consequences and implications for the region. Bryza countered that there is no status quo in Abkhazia; if Georgia loses hope in its NATO prospects, the chance of armed conflict will increase; conversely, as Georgia feels more securely anchored to NATO, its behavior will grow increasingly tempered. Bryza said the U.S. will insist that Russia fulfill its Istanbul commitments. Bryza said weakness only feeds Russian aggression, and Russia cannot have a veto on Georgia's NATO membership. He pointed out that Azerbaijan has been successful vis-a-vis Russia by being firm yet respectful. He noted that Baku has used the cutoff of Azeri oil exports to Russia in response to Gazprom's bullying of Baku on natural gas supplies to soften Moscow's approach to Azerbaijan. Bryza said that the UN "Friends" group on Georgia will meet on June 26-27 in Vienna or Geneva to explore ways to reduce tension in the Gali District, implement CBMs, and rejuvenate the settlement process in light of UN deliberations on Kosovo. Bryza noted that Georgian President Saakashvili was ready to meet with Abkhaz de-facto & President Bagapsh without preconditions; but Bagapsh refused any Abkhaz contact with the Georgians unless Georgia withdrew governmental structures from the Upper Kodori Valley, which was a non-starter. Bryza requested that Turkey encourage the Abkhaz de-facto leaders to engage Georgian leaders.

POLICY PLANNING AND ARMENIA WITH DG CENGIZER

18. (C) MFA Policy Planning Director Altay Cengizer told

Bryza that his main project in the next year -- which he is spending at Harvard's JFK School of Government and Center for International Affairs -- is to deepen the GOT's thinking on energy security matters and the Armenian genocide issue. Concentrating on Armenia, Cengizer said he wants to expand the dialogue both in Turkey and the U.S. on the events of 1915, with an eye toward a deeper understanding of the full range of tragic events transpiring in eastern Anatolia during World War One. Cengizer said his goal was genuine reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia as both countries come to terms with their common history. Cengizer believed Turkey's current, doctrinaire approach to the events of 1915 was not working. Bryza agreed, and suggested that rather than insisting that Ottoman Turks did nothing terrible but Armenians destabilized eastern Turkey (e.g., "no, but") Turkey might consider acknowledging in a more formal way that Ottoman troops committed terrible acts and Armenians may have as well (e.g., "yes, and"). Cengizer concurred that Turkey's position should be "yes, and;" that is, terrible events (though short of genocide) occurred in 1915 -- perpetrated by some in authority in the dying Ottoman Empire -- and these events took place in a complex political environment in which both sides share responsibility.

¶9. (C) Cengizer hoped that such a process -- which he admitted would require significant advancement on the part of Turkish intellectuals and the media -- would create the space necessary for Turkey and Armenia to make political progress. Bryza agreed, but added that in the short run an Armenian Genocide Resolution (AGR) will likely resurface during the next 12 months. Cengizer agreed that his project was unlikely to make sufficient progress in such a short time, but cautioned that an AGR would make it impossible for years to come. Cengizer added that he is "unabashedly" committed to the U.S.-Turkey relationship, and asserted that the AGR issue presents an even greater threat to the relationship than disagreements over Iraq.

¶10. (C) Cengizer reported that there will be a gap over the summer until his replacement -- as yet unnamed -- is in place. He said Turkey was gratified by February policy planning talks, and believed they should be held if possible twice a year rather than annually. He suggested that the next round expand their view of the world. He admitted that Turkey's policy planning staff does not have the intellectual strength to think creatively about the Far East and Pacific regions, as well as Latin America. He asked for a more fulsome picture of the USG's worldview. He added that this perspective would help MFA more usefully understand globalization and how it benefits Turkey. As a

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larger democracy with an economy of scale, Turkey is already a winner from globalization, but anti-EU and anti-U.S. attitudes are feeding a negative Turkish view of the outside world, which Cengizer finds vexing and frightening.

¶11. (U) DAS Bryza cleared this cable.

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